General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Philosophy 70A: Ancient Philosophy        GE Area: C2

Results reported for AY 2015-2016      # of sections: 2      # of instructors: 2

Course Coordinator: Tom Leddy   E-mail: Thomas.leddy@sjsu.edu

Department Chair:  Janet Stemwedel    College:  H & A

Instructions: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be electronically submitted, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1
To be completed by the course coordinator:

(1) What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

   SLO 2: Letters courses will enable students to respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.

(2) What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

Two instructors (Leddy and Shaw) taught sections of Phil. 70A. They used standard anthologies, containing primary source readings by important ancient philosophers such as Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, Epicurus, and various Stoics and other ancient philosophers. Students have weekly writing assignments in which they respond personally to what they have been reading. In addition to written homework, there are exams, presentations, or term papers. These all require critical analysis of the works that students have been reading and discussing in class, but in philosophy we commonly combine research-based critical analysis and personal response in the same paper. All of the homework assignments, presentation, and term paper fall into this pattern. With respect to research an important lesson to learn is distinguishing primary from secondary sources and recognizing the role of each in philosophical inquiry. Another, simply technical matter with research is that most students do not know how to provide a proper footnote, and so they are taught this and quizzed on it. A major role in teaching for this SLO goes to a standard document of the department: “Guidelines on Writing Papers in Philosophy” to be found on the department website. All students are expected to be familiar with it. Research issues, for example how to research in the library, are covered in detail. Our review of student course work shows that all students who completed the course with a passing grade achieved this SLO.

(3) What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this)

This course works well the way it is, so no modification is needed.
Part 2

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes - Janet Stemwedel, Department Chair

(5) If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE SLOs for writing.

Class enrollment for this course did not exceed GE guidelines this year. If it did it would be modest, no more than 12 per cent. This does not pose a problem for getting sufficient feedback. The instructor of record provides feedback and grades all writing assignments and welcomes, if not requires, first drafts of all writing assignments and provides feedback on drafts. If sections are exceptionally oversized (which would probably never happen for this course) they are graded by the instructor of record with the assistance of an Instructional Student Assistant (ISA). The ISA must be approved both by the Instructional Assistant Coordinator and the Philosophy Department Chair for their excellence in both composition and their expertise in the field of philosophy at issue. Whenever an ISA aids in the grading of a large course, s/he provides feedback along with grading. In all cases, when the help of an ISA is employed, the instructor of record must explicitly notify the students of the class that some writing assignments have been graded and feedback has been provided by an ISA. If a student is unhappy with an ISA grade the instructor of record will rereads the paper, provide additional feedback, and regrade the assignment (if that is warranted.) Generally speaking, any instructor who is teaching more than 100 GE students in a semester receives ISA help.